"those enduring matinee idols"

A CHRONOLOGICAL LOOK AT SOUND SERIALS (1929 - 1956)

CHAPTER 24
VOLUME 3 - NUMBER 4

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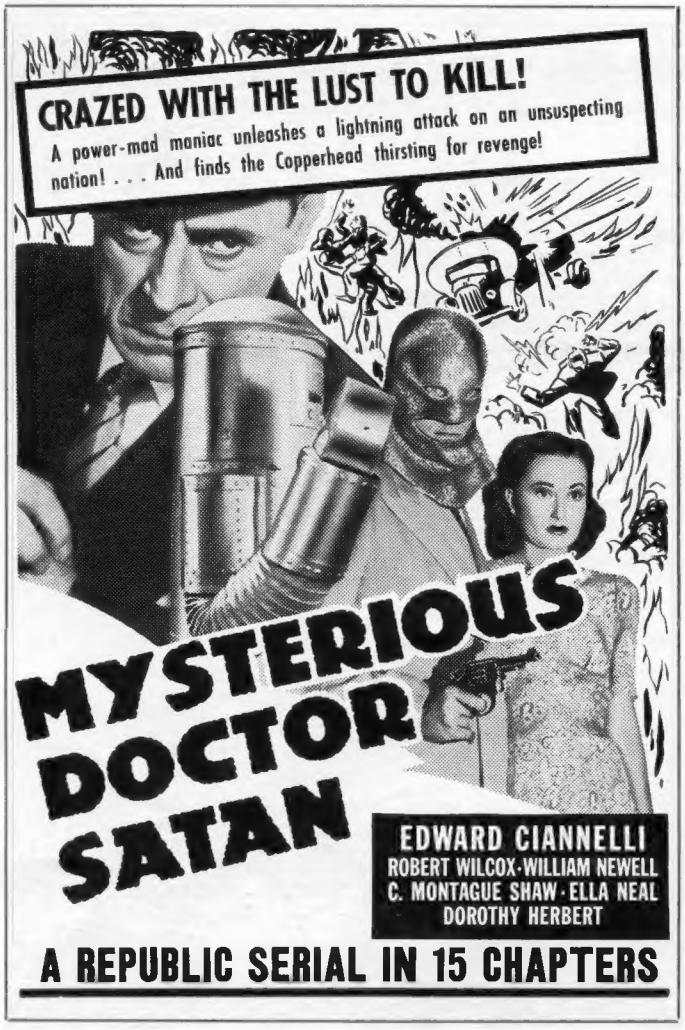
Stuntman David Sharpe as "The Copperhead" in MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR SATAN (See story on next page.)

MASTHEAD: BUD WOLFE in G-MEN NEVER FORGET and ROBERT FISKE in THE SHADOW (See letters on page 359).



***PROLOGUE* by Jim Stringham**

Edward Ciannelli took top billing for the title role in MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR SATAN; however, some of the poster art advertising the serial used his more familiar moniker, Eduardo. Regardless, the picture was almost entirely Ciannelli's own. Henry Brandon (pages 291-292), originally to have played the role, intended to "hoke it up for the kids" — to "wear slight horns, a goatee, and have a club foot." Ciannelli's Satan was more businesslike than bizarre. Yet, he created a villain who projected an understated, yet total, menace comparable to that of Brandon in the earlier DRUMS OF FU MANCHU.

Robert Wilcox, hero Bob Wayne, appeared as an almost disinterested protagonist. A disguise of sorts was introduced (on the thinnest of pretexts) to bring the character to life. There was no change of clothes, but "The Copperhead" appeared when Bob donned a hood of that metal which masked the upper half of his face. In Chapter 5, he put the hood on a gangster and wore a handkerchief which covered only the ***lower*** half, but, still, no one noticed the obvious.

The hood, though, allowed expert stuntman Dave Sharpe to take over for some of the wildest fights and stunts ever filmed. The transformation of Wilcox as Wayne into Sharpe as "The Copperhead" in the action sequences was as effective as that of Billy Batson into Captain Marvel.

William Newell (reporter Speed Martin) was a veteran performer who claimed to have played in over twenty pictures for Republic in the studio's first year of production. Serial veteran C. Montague Shaw appeared as Thomas Scott, inventor of the remote control unit needed by Satan. Ella Neal played his daughter Lois, heroine of the story. The role of Scott's secretary, Alice Brent, was written to showcase the equestrienne abilities of Dorothy Herbert, skilled circus and movie horsewoman. Long time favorites included Jack Mulhall as the Chief of Police, Charles Trowbridge as the doomed Governor Bronson, and Edwin Stanley as Colonel Bevans of the Army.

Principal heavies of Satan were Walter McGrail as Stoner and Joe McGuinn as Gort. His other aides included Bud Geary (Hallett), Al Taylor (Joe), Kenneth Terrell (Corwin), Lynton Brent (Scarlett), Alan Gregg (Red) — and, The Robot, with Tom Steele wearing the costume.

Special effects of the Lydecker brothers and the outstanding Cy Feuer score were up to the high standards already established by Republic. Direction by William Witney and John English was again superior. Particular credit should be given to writers Franklyn Adreon, Ronald Davidson Norman S. Hall, Joseph Poland and Sol Shor. Their first chapter departed from the routine for an especially gripping opening. The viewer, with Bob Wayne, entered a story already at the point where they result in the murder of an arriving criminologist. Thus, only two brief expository scenes are needed, and each is followed by a violent death and leads into an action sequence. Well paced use of the robot throughout the serial also helped. It was an offstage menace until chapter five, then was used effectively until disabled in the episode seven cliff-hanger. This was followed by a western sequence, then, back in the city, the robot appeared in chapters eleven and twelve before being again disabled. It returned to action in chapter fourteen, and, of course, would "star" in the climatic defeat of Doctor Satan.

But Ciannelli's performance was probably the key to acceptance of the serial. If you believed Doctor Satan, the rest followed. And he brought it off. His calm, self-assured performance left little doubt as to Satan's ability to carry out his criminal endeavors. In the first chapter he is responsible for the murder of a leading criminologist. Then, the Governor himself read a death notice — which bursts into flame in his hands . . .

The Stranger and Governor Bronson.

. . . and he is gunned down. Other master criminals raged at their men for any failure. Contrast Satan's actions, again in chapter one. His assassin (Paul Marion) is captured and talks. Satan, almost casually, executes him in police headquarters by remote control.

L. to R.: Bob Wayne (Robert Wilcox), Lois Scott (Ella Neal); Speed (William Newell), Chief Rand (Jack Mulhall), D.A. Man No. 1 (Robert Wayne) and D.A. Man No. 2 (William Stahl) question The Stranger (Paul Marion).

Another terrified heavy reports a failure, but Satan dismisses him because "You obeyed orders."

CHAPTER TITLES

1. Highway of Death
2. Double Jeopardy
3. Bridge of Peril
4. Death Closes In
5. Crack-up
6. Disguised
7. The Flaming Coffin
8. The Monster Strikes
9. Return of the Copperhead
10. Thirteen Steps
11. Undersea Tomb
12. The Human Bomb
13. Doctor Satan's Man of Steel
14. Double Cross
15. Doctor Satan Strikes

And now on with the story as . . .
Adapted by BOB MALCOMSON
and ERIC HOFFMAN
with assistance from C.M. Parkhurst.

The Governor's murderer, before being electrocuted, relates that Satan wants an invention of Thomas Scott, and which the scientist is bringing via train to Capitol City. Bob Wayne and Speed race to overtake the train — while Doctor Satan and two agents fly ahead and board at Maple Junction.

Tho Scott's briefcase with the plans is heisted from the baggage compartment, Wayne (as The Copperhead) retrieves it. Scott explains to Lois, Alice and Bob he is working on a remote control "cell," and will demonstrate it on an ocean-going yacht. Satan covets the plans needed for an army of robots to break into bank vaults.

Lois is in charge of the radio on the yacht. Satan steals Scott's control board, and instructs his agents to blow-up the craft when it reaches a speed of 25 knots. The Copperhead learns of the scheme and races to the yacht in a speedboat, in time for Lois (and others) to abandon ship before the explosion.

Next, Scott undertakes to demonstrate his invention on a pilotless plane, having quickly constructed a replacement control board. Speed runs to phone Scott that the "cell" is in place. Satan learns of this and has an agent board the plane via a rope ladder from another aircraft to steal the "cell".

Unknown to Satan's agent, The Copperhead is hidden aboard the plane. A fight ensues and the agent crashes thru the door and plummets to the earth. Removing his mask, Wayne lands the aircraft in a deserted field... only to be made a captive of Gort and Stoner, who had been following the plane in an automobile. Wayne is wisked away to Satan's lair.

Wayne is tied-up, but manages to cut his bonds, knockout the single man (Mike) guarding him, and escape. Satan is furious and has Mike destroyed in a mass of electrical voltage and sparks. (L. to R.: Hallett, Mike, Gort, Stoner and Satan.)

Speed is taken a prisoner to Satan's hideout. There he is outfitted with a control disc and explosives (making him into a human bomb). Then he's given a drug to temporarily remove his will power. Satan dispatchs Speed to Scott's residence to obtain the "cell" plans.

Wayne appears as The Copperhead and holds Satan and his men at bay. However, he backs up under the same device that killed Mike. Satan slides his hand to the control lever, evidently destroying The Copperhead in the electronic death trap.

But when Speed arrives at Scott's house, Wayne removes the deadly belt and hurls it away moments before Satan detonates it via remote control. Satan's men attack and kidnap Scott after a wild melee. Wayne pursues the car carrying off Scott...

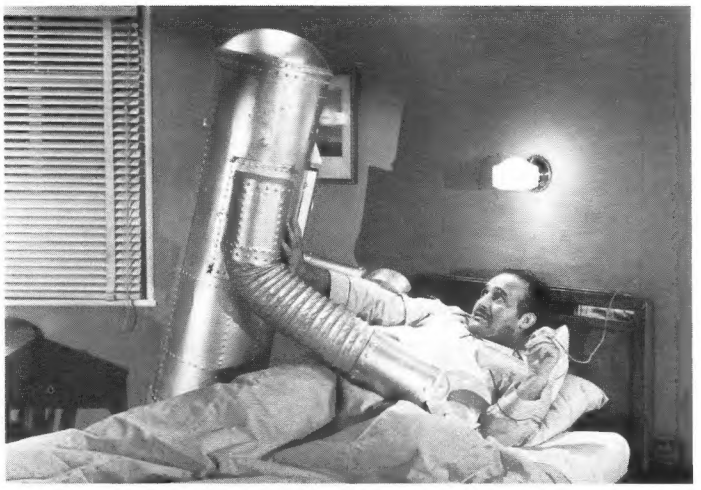
The Copperhead sees Satan's movement and shoots the lever, short-circuiting the power. Later, Wayne learns of Satan's plan to retrieve the control "cell" from the sunken yacht... and he and Lois almost meet a watery death in a diving chamber attempting to get the "cell" before Satan's minions.

...and shoots a hole in the gas tank, forcing Satan's agents to stop and hijack a gasoline truck. To lighten the load, and gain speed, Gort opens a valve releasing gasoline on the road. A spark ignites the liquid. Wayne, following, drives into a mass of flame, his car blasted to bits. (He manages to leap clear prior to the explosion.)

Thru a clever ruse using radio contact, Scott is able to tell Lois and Wayne where he is being held captive. At the hideout, The Copperhead attacks Corwin (and Hallett) knocking them out. Then he, in turn, is almost crushed to death by Satan's robot before being dropped into the ocean.

Scott is given a will-killing drug and tells the secret of his "cell": a rare element called Tungite, of which he has a supply at his home. There, Lois is taken captive. She manages to phone Wayne, who is overpowered when he attempts to rescue her. Satan demonstrates how a basket of pellets suspended over a pan of acid will produce poisonous gas and death!

In need of more Tungite, Satan sends agents to a drug warehouse. The robot is sent along to crush the watchman to death. Speed appears and so does The Copperhead. The robot attacks... bringing a whole shelve of "hydocic acid" down on The Copperhead and himself. Fortunately, The Copperhead is able to roll out of the path of the avalanche of bottles.



Fallon, an agent of Satan, is hospitalized after being knocked from a catwalk by The Copperhead. Afraid he'll talk, Satan has the robot smuggled into the hospital. By remote control, he has the metal monster "squeeze" Fallon to death. Wayne appears and sees the enemy car leaving...

...and follows it to one of Satan's hideouts. However, Satan plunges The Copperhead thru a trap door into a barred cubical and starts the walls of the cell closing in. Cleverly using a polished cigarette case as a mirror to take aim at the control panel, The Copperhead shoots and short circuits the controls.

Doctor Satan's diabolical schemes come to an ironic conclusion in Chapter 15. Lois, Speed, and Perry and Brock (from the D.A.'s office) are captured and tied in chairs. The fate of each is to be the deadly embrace of the robot! Satan departs, leaving it to Stoner and Gort, via tele-screen, to control the robot.

In the hallway, Satan runs into The Copperhead and is knocked out. Wayne makes a quick decision and whips off his hood revealing his identity to Scott (no longer under Satan's influence). He puts the hood on Satan, then hides. When Satan's men appear, they accept Scott's story that he found The Copperhead prowling around the house. The thugs carry "The Copperhead" into the robot room and put him in a chair next to Lois.

Stoner and Gort, on the tele-screen, see "The Copperhead" and direct the robot in his direction. Just then, Wayne and Scott burst into the control room and a fight follows. Satan comes to. He rips off the hood and yells for Gort and Stoner to stop the robot, but to no avail as the metal automation carries its screaming creator thru the window to destruction hundreds of feet to the rocks below.

SERIAL PANEL DISCUSSION

HOUSTONCON '73

KIRK "SUPERMAN" ALYN | *STUNTMAN DAVID SHARPE* | *DIRECTOR WILLIAM WITNEY* | *AUTHOR ALAN BARBOUR* | *ACTOR FRANK COGHLAN* | *ACTOR WILLIAM BENEDICT*

PROLOGUE

HOUSTONCON '73 has passed into history and those who attended consider themselves fortunate indeed.

Earl Blair and his top-notch staff provided many high points. One of those high points was Mr. Blair's ability (to say nothing of his fervor) in bringing together four delightful guests from Hollywood to form a serial panel discussion group with noted author Alan Barbour serving as moderator. All questions came from the audience.

Much said during the discussion is worthy of posterity, and that is why extensive coverage is being given to it in TEMI. In some cases both questions and answers are available in past Chapters of TEMI and for this reason only excerpts from the panel discussion are included here.

We are indebted to* C. M. *PARKHURST for taping the discussion, then transcribing and editing it for present and future TEMI readers. Mr. Parkhurst also provided the photos.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Barbour: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, thank you for joining us this afternoon. I see many young people out there. You who grew up with television can't conceive of what it was like in the '30's and '40's when we had only radio through the week and how we looked forward to our once a week visit to the neighborhood theater to see the work of these men up here. Contrary to popular opinion the violence that was in those early serials didn't seem to harm too many of us — it was less harmful than some of the things they're doing today and certainly a lot more entertaining, so I'm glad that the younger people are getting a chance to see the serials. Unfortunately, they're not being shown in quite the proper way — ideally you should see them one chapter at a time, because when you see all fifteen at once it's just too much to comprehend and enjoy fully. So, if you ever get a chance to rescreen these things, do them one at a time and fully appreciate them.

The biographies of the men up here have been well covered in your program book so I won't waste your time by re-evaluating their careers. [Editor's Note: See page 337 of TEMI for listing of past references to the panel members.]

Of course, there's ***Kirk Alyn*** down there . . . humble Kirk is the last of the great serial kings! If I call ***Dave Sharpe*** the greatest stuntman in the business he'll take offense and hit me, so I'll just say he's one of the greatest athletes. Next, ***Bill Witney*** . . . here's the man behind it all, together with Jack English. Bless his heart, Jack English isn't with us any more, but from the way Bill talked about him I'm sure he would get a kick out of this. It's their work that most of us respect and appreciate today — Bill Witney! Finally, we get to the kids over here — ***Frank Coghlan*** and ***Billy Benedict***. Between them they've made at least a thousand flicks. I don't think you can count their credits, but they are two of the leads in Republic's most famous and popular serial, ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL. Of course, a lot of people will say THE LONE RANGER, but I think a lot of that was because people hadn't seen THE LONE RANGER in a long time and now that they're able to see them both, CAPTAIN MARVEL seems to generate the most excitement. Maybe because it's such a fine plotted serial. There are many, many reasons why you enjoyed CAPTAIN MARVEL and their part in it — Frank Coghlan and Billy Benedict! And now, let's have the first question.

Question: Mr. Benedict, which picture, out of all those you worked in, did you enjoy the most?

Benedict: Captain Marvel, of course, What did you expect me to say with Bill Witney sitting here?

Barbour: I'm sure a lot of people would probably ask you how Tom Tyler respected the role of Captain Marvel. You all took serials very seriously. You never played down to the kids, just played them straight, What was Tom's reaction to playing Marvel?

Witney: Tom was a very serious fellow. He was one of those people who appreciated a job, like most actors in those days. A gentlemanly, soft spoken, nice man, he treated everyone with respect and asked for nothing, really. He was very handy and had a lot of guts in the wireworks and closeups in front of the process screen. And those wire belts hurt! I never heard him complain. They look so easy but they sometimes cut into you to a point where you bleed.

Coghlan: I never got to see Tom in the wireworks, but I can certainly concur because I've been in them myself. I'd known Tom for years before, when he was a western actor. Strangely enough, in the six weeks or so we worked on the Marvel serial I never got to be in a scene with him. We were on the set together and I'd say "Shazam" and go off to play cribbage or something and he'd go to work. I saw a lot of him, of course, and had the same feeling that Bill expressed — he was just a nice person.

Sharpe: I probably knew Tom longer than anyone here. We were both competing for the Los Angeles Athletic Club before Tom ever got into the motion picture business. He competed in the Olympic Games as a weight lifter and I was a gymnast. I must concur with everything said about Tom. He was one of the finest most likeable, gentlemanly persons I've ever known. He was quiet and a very professional, dear man. Tom was enormously strong and I'm half his size. I did most of the acrobatic things — the flying leaps, jumps, somersaulting, but when it came to lifting a man up, throwing him through a window, something like that, Tom was more than capable of doing it. He was

extremely agile for a big man and did many of the leaps and jumps himself so Bill could get much better pictorial value by photographing the leading man doing it. They built a special costume for me with what we call "symetricals" to enlarge my muscles, give me wider shoulders, enlarge my chest, etc. You might wonder how it's possible to use a man as small as myself to double Tom. If he was working with a couple of heavies who were six inches shorter than he was, when I was required to do something acrobatic with them, we'd use doubles that were six inches shorter than myself.

Question: It had been Republic's policy to dub in voices like those of the Scorpion and the Masked Marvel in order to throw off the viewer, but in DICK TRACY VS. CRIME, INC. you used Ralph Morgan's voice and in the last chapter the Ghost turned out to *be* Ralph Morgan! Why was that?

Witney: You can be sure that Ralph Morgan wasn't behind the Ghost's mask for the entire serial. As I recall, they brought him in for one day and all his stuff was shot and "wild tracked" later. Ralph Morgan was a very unagile New York actor, and I'm sure that he worked only one day and was cut in editing. I can remember a Mascot serial where Yakima Canutt doubled for the heavy. Now, Yak is 6'4" and the last minute of the last day they cast the part of the heavy, and it was Henry B. Walthall, who is about 5'3".

[Editor's Note: Mr. Witney, remembering back 38 years to 1935, is not quite correct in his statement. Mascot, absurdly, decided to have the man behind the "Tiger Shark" mask in THE FIGHTING MARINES exposed in the last reel as Colonel Bennett's "mess boy", played by the rather short Jason Robards, Sr. See TEMI, page 65.]

Question: Why was it that Tom Steele who was behind the mask in THE MASKED MARVEL, didn't receive any credit?

Barbour: A lot of people were under contract to Republic, particularly the stuntmen. Tom told me that the serial was specifically designed for his services; the mask was molded to his face and it was easy for him to work behind it. All the stunts of the Masked Marvel, he did. Not only that, he played several other roles in the film. He doubled the four Masked Marvel suspects, and played a villain in it as sort of a guest role. It's true he didn't get any billing at all but I think it's due to the fact that he was under contract and, as Dave can tell you, there was a thing about stuntmen in those days of Hollywood — you assumed that the heroes were doing their own stunts.

Sharpe: Yes, for years stuntmen were completely anonymous.

Benedict: That's Dave Anonymous there.

Witney: When a stuntman's anonymous, I want to be the first to know.

Alyn: Just a mild mannered stuntman.

Sharpe: Seriously, it was considered very unethical for a star and stuntman in the star's wardrobe to sit even remotely closely together in the commissary at lunch. We were creating a great illusion. It was a very glamourous and romantic illusion and we tried for years to maintain it, that all stars did the entire picture. But eventually someone caught on otherwise and began exploiting the fact that there were men who did occasionally step in and do something for a star. But for many, many years you could not give interviews or indicate otherwise that the star was not really doing whatever he was shown doing on the screen.

Coghlan: I worked with Joe Bonomo in THE GREAT CIRCUS MYSTERY (1925). He was a ***very*** strong man. We would see him tear up telephone books.

Alyn: On the SUPERMAN serials, as I've said before, they tried to use a stuntman in the first few days of shooting. On the very first day of shooting a fellow jumped out of a truck and broke his toe and they had another stuntman, Paul Stader, do a couple of things with the second unit. Later, Spence Bennet said: "Kirk, it doesn't look like you; you'll have to do it all over again." So we didn't use a stuntman from there on. I did everything myself, and in the second serial we didn't use a stuntman at all.

Question: Mr. Witney, you have said that your favorite serial is DRUMS OF FU MANCHU. May I ask why you made that selection out of all your serials?

Witney: Both Jack English and I put a lot of time on that serial both in pre-production and production. We gave it a lot of thought and both of us felt it had a little more class, a little more adult approach and yet it was for the kids. I think if Jack were here he'd tell you that it was his favorite of the bunch, if we had a favorite. Actually, you didn't have a favorite. In those days you made them and walked away, went home and burned the script and hoped you'd never think of it again. They were just a lot of hard, hard work!

The Hays Office was really unhappy that we let Fu Manchu survive at the end of the serial. I think our argument was that it was the character Sax Rohmer created and we had a contract with Rohmer that we must keep him alive at the end. I believe, although I wasn't in on it, that there were words spoken about it and we got by with that kind of argument.

I'll tell you something about the violence in serials. We felt that it was all play acting. You never saw any blood; you never saw a bullet go into a man and blood spurt out fourteen feet. You never saw anybody's teeth get kicked out, and never in any serial saw a man get hit over the head with actual contact. You never saw a man get physically beat up, where somebody holds him and just beats him to death as we see now. Sure, it was play acting violence. The Hays Office had certain codes and they would look at these things. Sometimes there were arguments and you'd have to cut something out, but you'd ***always*** argue about them. They had a lot of backup — they could ban your pictures. We weren't as afraid of the Hays Office on the serials as we were of the Church groups — the Catholic League. We never had a serial put on the list, as far as I know. They were made for children and we always had in the back of our mind that while the slogan on the wall said, "A pair of wet panties for every little kiddie," we really didn't mean it.

Mention has been made of the "low key" ending of chapter five where there was no cliff-hanger. We used to call that a "production ending" and we felt that Henry Brandon was strong enough to hold an episode ending by himself. I believe it was the only one that he was actually in on the end by himself. Usually, it was somebody else about to be dropped into a pit or run over by a truck or something. I remember that ending and there was no discussion about it. We felt it was a very strong ending.

Question: Henry Brandon had said that he was picked to play Doctor Satan complete with cape and horns, and at the last minute they changed to Edward Ciannelli. Do you know anything about that?

Witney: I can't remember, really. It's been too long ago. There are a lot of times when things happen and you change your mind at the last minute. You go in one direction and you suddenly say, "No, you don't want it that way, let's do it another way." Casting is like that — you can get hurt terribly in casting a bad character with the wrong person. He might be a fine actor but he's just wrong. If we were making serials today, it would still hold true.

Question: Mr. Witney, did you or the other Republic directors get involved at all in the process of scoring the music for serials after they were in the can?

Witney: No. Never.

Question: Mr. Alyn, could you tell us something about the making of the SUPERMAN serials?

Alyn: Well, we worked very fast on serials. We didn't waste any time because the schedules were pretty tight and when you're in a uniform every day for a week doing the exteriors and all those tricks, you sort of forget that the fellow's just an earthling and begin to believe he's that which he's portraying. There were very many times when we'd talk over rehearsal and then the director would say, "All right, let's do it with the camera and everything." I was forever carrying the girl but there were many times when I'd carry both people at the same time. So I'd pick them both up and carry them out and he'd say, "Do it once more, Kirk." So I'd do it again and again. About the fourth time I was getting a little tired and by then he'd say, "All right, we'll take this one!" So I picked up both of those characters and as I went past the camera lens he said, "That was fine, Kirk, but you were straining a little bit. I saw the veins on your neck." I said, "Spence, those are real people we rehearsed with five or six times!" He said, "Oh, I'm sorry, Kirk, I forgot." This happened several times during rehearsals. You get so involved with getting everything synchronized like the lights, cameras — there are fires and smoke that had to come in and it's hard to synchronize those so you completely forget that that you're supposed to be carrying dummies, not real people.

The first day of shooting in the uniform of Superman I left home and went out into the world (the railroad station at Chatsworth) where there was a lot of hubbub and running around because the big express was coming through and there was no way to stop it. So,

I look with my X-ray eyes down the tracks and see the heavies bending the rails, pushing them out of shape with all kinds of equipment. I thought I must do something about this so I got into the Superman uniform and went down there. You could see the train coming down the tracks so I took the rail and pushed it back and held it there while the train went over. Now, in order to get this effect we had people from the railroad company come down. The director asked, "How far back from the track can Kirk be while the train comes by and still be safe?" The railroad man said, "If he stays eighteen inches back and doesn't move, he won't get hurt. That's how far back we put the switches, but he must stay rigid and stay right there." I'm listening to all this and thinking when the time comes to shoot it the train's going to slow down and they're going to undercrank it. I braced myself against the track and they set up the reflectors and camera on the other side of the track, lined up shooting up into my face so they can catch the expression. The man said, "Stay right there, Kirk." And with that he moved back about fifty feet. Then the men set the reflectors and I see them edging back, too. Well, I figured the cameraman and the director had to be there, and just as the train approached to where you could see it, a couple miles down the track, I heard the cameraman say, "Good luck, Kirk." And the director says, "We have to get it in one take, Kirk, or we'll have to wait till tomorrow to do it again." Well, I get an empty feeling in my stomach — should I get up and run or should I stick with it? Then, as the train comes closer something inside says to me, "The cape! Suppose the wind blows my cape!" So I tucked it under my belt and instead of slowing down the son-of-a-gun comes through at 90 miles an hour! The idea behind the whole shot was to show the wheels going between the camera and me so you could see me holding the track, looking rigid. Well, I was rigid, all right. I was petrified with fear! The only thing woke me up was when the director came over, slapped me on the shoulder and said, "That was great, Kirk, we got it in one take." And — I thought to myself, "That's all you have to do — tell an actor he's great and he'll kill himself for you."

Question: Mr. Sharpe, what's the worst injury, or how close did you come to death in the production of a film?

Sharpe: I don't believe it, and I'm sure no one here will, but in the years I've been in the business I've never been hurt, never been knocked out, never broken a bone. I've had some bad bruises, some sprains, but no injuries that resulted in my not being able to work. Now, this is a question that's been asked many, many times and it's a difficult one to answer because it seems so utterly absurd — I couldn't be that skillful; I couldn't be that lucky! I've analyzed the question and thought about it very seriously. My answer to it is this — I honestly believe, as Rocky Graziano, the great middleweight fighter wrote in his wonderful book, "Somebody Up There Likes Me." Well, I think He liked us both.

Witney: Let me tell you about somebody liking Dave Sharpe. He's the only man I've ever known who can think that 'split second' when he's in the air. On CAPTAIN MARVEL he was diving off a cliff. Now, we've got a fire net on an angle like this (gestures) so that when he dives off he can turn into it a certain way. We have a crew holding it, and Dave had to hold the pose until he was out of the camera (range). The minute he was out of the camera, his hands came down and just before he hit the net he flattened out and went into it backwards. He stood and he set the net and he made a mistake; he set it just a little too far. Now, this is on rocks, and a 35 or 40 foot drop! We had a grip named Nelson Mathias who always worked with us and who we called "Little Goliath". David came off the cliff and Mathias saw that he wasn't going to hit the net so he (Mathias) backed off and put up his hands. Dave beat his hands off him and laid into the net. Now, somebody up there might like him, but I think the ability he has helped, too. I've seen him in wrecks where he came out smelling like a rose and I pray to God that he always does.

Question: Mr. Benedict, I'd like to know something about working with Huntz Hall and Leo Gorcey.

Benedict: Here are two men with tremendous talent, and as most of you know, who followed the Bowery Boys, when Leo left the series Stanley Clements came in to take over Leo's character. It didn't last very long. That's no reflection on Stanley, he's a very fine actor, but in the 12 years or so that the series continued, anytime you have a team this close and that work as well together as Leo and Huntz, and one of them leaves, you've pretty well had it because one without the other just isn't the same, at least in a series. It was a lot of fun working with Leo and Huntz on those; they were extremely versatile and very quick. Of course, they drove Bill Beaudine crazy, and they drove a lot of other actors crazy and out of the business. Believe me, they almost did. It was one of those things where they had a pattern of operation—you'd receive a script, but I never paid any attention to them after the first film I did with them. I just forgot about the dialogue because you just jumped in whenever you found an opening. Whenever there was a moment's silence, that's when you read your line whether it fit or not. Byron Foulger had an unhappy experience with the Bowery Boys and he swore he'd never again make a picture with them. Byron had a lot of speeches and being a good, professional actor he arrived on the set knowing his dialogue, but when the sequence was started he suddenly was faced with the fact that the dialogue had not only been changed but the boys, when they worked, just automatically jumped in and cut him off on his speeches. Well, they drove this poor man out of this mind!

Of course, now Leo has passed away but Huntz is still at it and doing very well. [Editor's Note: Beaudine was director.]

Sharpe, Benedict, Coghlan, Witney and Alyn.

Question: Mr. Witney, before you shot THE LONE RANGER did you know that Lee Powell would be the Lone Ranger or was it decided during shooting?

Witney: No, the scripts were finished weeks before hand. First, a synopsis of each episode was given you. You'd read it and if you had any ideas, speak up. Then a rough draft was made of each episode and you'd read that. If you had any suggestions you would go to the conference involving the writers. A final screenplay was made of the script and again you had one more chance for changes when they'd insert the colored revision pages in the script. If you found a location didn't exactly fit, you'd rewrite it to fit that location yourself, but you knew exactly where the picture was going from the very beginning.

Question: There was a rumor going around that Lane Chandler was to be the Lone Ranger and not Lee Powell.

Witney: No, Powell was cast in that part and everyone knew how it was going to come out, and who was going to be killed in between times.

[Editor's Note: Mr. Witney is correct that the final shooting script used during production has Allen King (Lee Powell) revealed in the last reel as the Lone Ranger. An earlier shooting script, in which direct quotes are taken and appear on page 25 of TEMI, indicate Dick Forrest (Lane Chandler) would be the Lone Ranger. Obviously the script underwent revisions, probably long before casting of the roles.]

Question: Just for the record, Mr. Witney, exactly how much did THE LONE RANGER cost?

Witney: I can't really give you a rundown on it, but as I recall Republic features in those days cost around $35,000. I believe we spent almost a million dollars on THE LONE RANGER, and they had their money back within six weeks. I can tell you how much *I* was making — $75.00 a week and that was a lot of money in those days.

[Editor's Note: We can substantiate the fact that THE LONE RANGER cost under $200,000. See page 200. We won't quarrel with

the fact that certain sequences directed by Witney/English, without exaggeration, made it ***look*** like "a million dollar production". Mr. Witney was certainly underpaid.]

Question: There are a lot of production stills of The Lone Ranger shot behind the camera. Were these used for publicity purposes or for location work, or what?

Witney: Well, I'd guess they must have been used for publicity purposes because we never had any stills made of sets or production. There was always one set still, but they tried to make it with nobody in it so if there was a retake it could be redressed as it was originally.

Question: In the early '30's Republic made the DICK TRACY serial and it was so successful they went ahead and did three more. Why did they kill Captain Marvel's powers in the first serial?

Witney: Well, we were in trouble right off the bat with Captain Marvel.

Coghlan: They had ***me*** in it.

Witney: We were in a lawsuit over Superman before we even started the picture, but the funny thing is it was resolved because we proved that Superman wasn't original, because Popeye did the same thing by eating spinach that Superman did by changing clothes, and they threw it out of court. They bought the theory that Popeye was the original Superman, and when you think about it, it ***is*** the same damned thing — he eats spinach and becomes Superman.

Question: How many months did it take to make a serial?

Witney: Most of them ran five to six weeks - some ran eight weeks. They gave you as much time as they felt was needed. Now, Fu Manchu was quite a schedule. We had terrific makeup problems because of the head pieces on all the dacoits. We knew it was going to be a problem but we wanted it that way. Henry Brandon was a three hour makeup job in the morning. Poor guy, I don't think he ever did go home. But you lay it out on the big master board and pull it all together, then the directors would come in and look it over. We had a wonderful assistant in those days named Louis Germonprez who became famous for a story about a picture we were making in Mecca. We had a production meeting that night because of the heavy rain and Louie said to the drivers, "Now look, it's raining, those roads we're going over in the morning are very muddy. Now, for God's sake, if anybody gets stuck in the mud, pull off to the side of the road and let the other trucks through!"

Anyway, he's put it on the master board, and the directors would say, "Louis, I can't make this day's work." So they'd add another day. I don't think we ever did go over schedule on a picture, but it was because we knew how much we could shoot. Sometimes you could shoot a lot of setups and other times not so many, it depended on the subject matter. If you've got two hundred people in the scene it's not the same as having two people. You had to sort of play it by ear, any picture does. When a director is assigned a picture and accepts a schedule, he's expected to make this schedule. You don't argue in the middle, when you're behind — and you're ***born*** behind schedule on a serial, believe me!

Coghlan: Someone asked me how many setups we did a day on Captain Marvel and I just guessed 25—does that sound about right?

Witney: Probably more like 75.

Benedict: What's the most setups you ever cracked in one day, Bill?

Witney: I remember once we did 140. It was a Zorro serial, and I dropped behind for three days.

Question: Mr. Coghlan, on the Captain Marvel serial, did you do your own stunts, and on those you didn't do did Dave double for you or did you get someone else?

Coghlan: If you recall, in most cases I would get into a situation, throw a couple of punches and get knocked down or something, then I could say "Shazam" and call on Tom. There weren't many times when I had to do anything really dangerous in it. I don't think, Dave, you ever got in for me, did you?

Sharpe: I never did, Frank. As I recollect you did everything that was required of that particular character.

Witney: Frankie, believe it or not, was a pretty doggone handy kid in those days.

Benedict: Skinny . . .

Coghlan: With hair . . .

Witney: And a very sweet, gentle man. He had an English Setter and I raised Setters. He used to come out to the house all the time. He was about, what, seventeen, eighteen. Frank?

Coghlan: No, I was twenty-four, Bill.

Witney: Well, he was small for his age. You're probably mad at me now because I never offered you a drink.

Question: Mr. Witney, could you give us the main reason why Republic Studios went out of business?

Witney: I'll tell you what. Read TEMI magazine. I told a fellow named Harry Sanford, "Look, this is off the record." Famous last words! But read the article and it will answer your question.

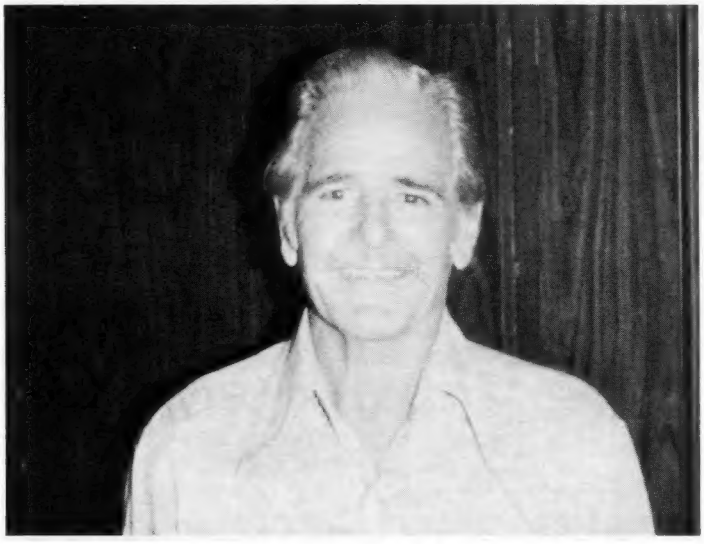
Question: I read the article, and it's true, then?

Witney: I didn't say that! I plead the fifth!

Question: Alan Barbour, do you have anything new coming out soon on serials?

Barbour: I wish I were an actor so I could say I'm "at liberty" — isn't that the phrase?

Witney: He told me last night he may publish a book I've written. A kid's book, and it's called "Jody" after Joe Yrigoyen, who's the stubbornest, orneriest, sweetest, meanest, most capable stuntman ever born. It's about a mule, and it fits him.



David Sharpe.

Question: Mr. Sharpe, you worked as a stuntman at Republic in the early '40's and then later at PRC and Monogram. What was the difference in the conditions you had to work under and the amount of liberty you had to create your own stunts?

Sharpe: You're referring to studios that operated quite similarly. It wasn't that much different.

Question: In the film "Colorado Serenade" which was screened yesterday, the picture just sort of drags along toward the end and suddenly it's as if Bill Witney was directing, and I wondered if you took over yourself and figured out what stunts you would do.

Sharpe: Working independently like that, I probably did. You know, Republic, in my opinion, was the finest action picture company that ever existed. They somehow managed to slowly gather on the one small lot the finest technicians, staff, directors and writers. Each man heading up, almost 100%, the finest artists in almost every department for the making of fast moving, short budget, motion pictures. I feel that I've been spoiled. Naturally, I've had difficulties at other studios in that great responsibility was placed on my own creativity, and I did have to exert more effort in my work. At Republic we had so much assistance, were so departmentalized involved, that if I had something to do I could call on the Lydecker boys, who headed up the special effects department—there never has been anything any better, or even as good. It was the same with our propmen, our unit managers. Bill mentioned Louis Germonprez. He was the man who invented the breakdown board he spoke of, and today it's used by every major studio in the world, or ***anyone*** making a motion picture.

When I did my work Bill always gave me ample time. We'd discuss it and estimate the time needed.

Witney: I've got a funny story about Dave. We were shooting a big fire sequence on a back lot and Dave is supposed to come out the third story window into a fire net. We have these big flame throwers blowing flames out and because it's such a big fall we've got the professional fire department there. They're got the hoses spraying on

it. Davey and I are sitting in our chairs watching the fire when the fire chief comes up and says to Dave, "Son, did you ever jump out of a window that high before?" Davey looks up at him and says, "Oh my, it *is* frightening!" The chief says, "Watch me, son, and do it exactly like I show you." So he crawls up to the third floor and he jumps out. Well, he didn't land right and he broke a leg, and just as they're putting him in the ambulance to take him to the hospital, Dave goes up to him and says, "Please, sir, do I have to do it ***exactly*** the way you did?"

Question: Mr. Witney, you also directed some of the Fu Manchu TV series . . .

Witney: We don't discuss that! We really didn't have too much to do with that—we just forget!

Question: A man like Roy Barcroft was always the main villain and a man like Kenne Duncan was always part of the group that worked under him. Did Roy Barcroft get a bigger salary because he played head villain?

Witney: That's an interesting thing. Andy Devine told me once, "You know, Billy, I can remember when I was fifth man through the door." Now, the guy getting the most money came through the door first, the next heavy came through second, and right on down the pay scale. That would be a good title for a book — "Fifth Man Through The Door."

Question: Every stuntman seemed to have his own specialty and I wonder if Dave Sharpe could comment on how the fights and stunts were designed.

Sharpe: Our pattern was this. Bill, when he was breaking down his script and was cognizant of each and every step there would be in the action, would check the set with the art director, see how many windows were in it, establish how the set would be decorated, etc., and would put in the furniture he wanted to have wrecked. Maybe he'd want a staircase or balcony. Then he'd check the location of the windows and exits. With the architectural and geographic locations fixed in his mind he would lay out just how he wanted the action to start and finish. Invariably, Bill would call me in and explain what he desired, where we'd begin, what characters were involved, what incident precipitated the action. He would give me a script,which was unusual, but Billy was like that and it points up another difference between Republic and the other studios—everyone knew exactly what was happening at all times. We would discuss it and from his predetermined patterns and my suggestions after I'd analyze his desires, would evolve a routine. Then we'd get the best men available to double the principals involved. At other studios the system was different. We'd come to the studio, they'd hire us and talk to us for about five minutes and turn us loose. The cameras would grind away and we'd fight until we couldn't go on any more. Of course, everyone was exhausted. When you go for three or four minutes in a fight, your timing and coordination are way off. Bill's invention was to pre-determine the entire routine as I've just explained, and then break it down into segments where we would do only two or three punches or falls. It was just a matter of taking 10 or 15 seconds, but they would be done superbly. This is one of the things that I've been asked about so much; the answer to why there was such a fluidity of movement, why it never lost its tempo. It was because of Billy's way of shooting. He'd only shoot a small segment but in his master optical picture of it. But that segment would be perfection. Everyone would be at his best. When a man had to do a stunt, say a fight had to go up a staircase and a fellow had to come through a railing, he didn't have to do that if he'd already fought for two minutes and was so exhausted he couldn't even push through the railing. There must be only two or three punches exchanged before he'd actually do the stunt—just enough to make it overlay and meld well. That was Billy's idea and it was a great one.

Question: Mr. Witney, it always bothered me that THE FIGHTING DEVIL DOGS was made at the time when the top Republic serials were being made and yet, for a 12 chapter serial, it had two "cheat" endings and one cliff-hanger used just the year before in DICK TRACY, where two ships come together and the little boat is caught in the middle. I wondered if there was a particular reason for that.

Witney: The reason for that was money. I happened to stand in the doorway a while ago and watched Captain Marvel where a ship was on the rocks. That was the end of episode one of SOS COAST GUARD and I remember it well. I caught that day with the tank and you should have seen Lugosi when one of those big tanks was tripped and hit him. We didn't find him for 15 minutes. I told him to hang on to the rail, we're going to trip it, and when the water clears away there's no Lugosi. Oh, it was a mess! But in answer to your question, it all comes down to money. We figured people wouldn't remember what happened the year before. Coast Guard was three or four years before and it was gone, had played its rounds and had long been forgotten. You seldom saw stock in the first two or three episodes. There is more stock in Marvel from a feature picture called "Storm Over Bengal." We stole from everybody we could. Stock is really a wonderful thing. I won a TV Emmy Award for a series called "Stories of the Century" and it was all built on stock. A lot of it I had shot, some was from Wayne pictures, others from some of the big Republic pictures. We know we've got the stock sequence and we used it a lot better than it was used in the original pictures 90% of the time.

Question: Mr. Witney, who was your biggest rival when you were at Republic?

Witney: I don't think we ever had a rival. Universal in those days was making some doggone good serials. Columbia? Eh!! Katzman? Oh, ugh!! Jack English tells a story about an independent producer that I just love. He made a picture for him, the title of which will remain nameless. He had just finished a picture and they were sitting in the projection room looking at it, the producer in the middle with Jack on one side and another fellow on the other. When the lights come up he turned to Jack and said, "It ***stinks***!", then he turned to the other man and said, "Ship it!"

Question: Mr. Sharpe. Are you still doing stunts? I know you look like you're in pretty good condition.

Witney: I can answer that. He's been handling all the stunt work and coordination on "Kung Fu."

Coghlan: I didn't know that, but I should have guessed.

Question: Mr. Witney, do you know who was in the Lightning's costume in THE FIGHTING DEVIL DOGS?

Witney: In those days it was probably Yakima. [Editor's Note: Mr. Witney has guessed incorrectly.] I could tell you in two minutes if I saw it. Yak had a way of moving and just before a stunt he'd pull his hat down over his ears. There's a funny story about Yak on THE LONE RANGER. They had that mask that came down to here (indicating the screen on the bottom half of the mask) and Yak always chewed tobacco. Now, he wore that mask so much that he'd forget it was there and all of a sudden you'd hear him say, "Dammit!" and you knew what had happened — he'd spit into the mask.

Question: Here's a question for the entire panel. Do they have a favorite film made during the last 15 years, made by others than themselves?

Benedict: Six months ago I saw "Gone with the Wind" for the first time, I'm ashamed to say, but I was overwhelmed! Absolutely overwhelmed! I could not believe what I saw on that screen. It was magnificent. I really felt ashamed that all that time had gone by and I had been so cheap that I wouldn't go and see it.

Coghlan: That's a shame, Bill. In the new version that you saw they changed the soundtrack and they cut my dialogue out. Actually, I haven't seen too many good pictures lately. I have to say one of the best pictures I've seen and had the pleasure of being in, was "The Sand Pebbles", for another great director, Bob Wise.

Alyn: I haven't seen too many good pictures in the past 15 years, either. I've seen perhaps four pictures in that time. I can't say I have a favortie at all.

Barbour: Kirk, go out and spend some money — see some movies!

Alyn: I spend the money, all right. I just don't go to movies!

Sharpe: "Gone with the Wind" wasn't made within the past 15 years.

Benedict: I only mentioned it because I had *just* seen it.

Sharpe: Like Kirk, I'm not a movie goer. I'll go along with CAPTAIN MARVEL.

Witney: I'll tell you what my two favorites are. One is the original "Mutiny on the Bounty". The other is "Casablanca".

Barbour: Like you people, I don't go out much to movies. I guess the last one I enjoyed, because it was an attempt to bring humor back to the screen, was "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World" where they had a lot of laughs and a lot of excitement tied together.

Witney: You don't have to go to the movies nowadays. You can join the Marines and get the same language.

Barbour: I'll go along with Dave and say CAPTAIN MARVEL.

Benedict: Incidently, I have a message to all of you from a gentleman who worked in "Mutiny on the Bounty", Mr. Eddie Quillan. He knew that we were coming down here, Frank and I, when he had dinner with us and our wives and Jim Schoenberger. Eddie and I are old friends and he was very much impressed with things that he (Jim) did and other people have done, so he sent his very best wishes to you.

Coghlan: I hope you all get to see the fine interview that Jim Shoenberger wrote for Bob Malcomson (TEMI, Pg. 304). He has a picture of the three of us together and it was a great day. I hadn't seen Eddie for a long time before that.

Question: Mr. Witney, how much control did you have over the editing of the serial?

Witney: Oh, we had full control. The director ***always*** had full control. The picture I just finished — I shouldn't be sitting here — until every scene is laid in place the way you shot it and feel it should be. A director never leaves any picture. That's the payoff right there. They can ruin you in the cutting room. These kids today aren't any Tony Martinelli, or like the kids who cut the serials. They're willing, they're "Gung Ho", but they don't know. The two cutters who are on the picture I just did told me the other night, "We've learned more since you've been in the cutting room with us than in the past three years." So you can figure what's happened to the picture business. They'll learn.

Question: Mr. Witney, you spoke earlier of the enthusiasm of the early serial years. Do you see any possibility of it going full cycle?

Witney: Who talked about the enthusiasm? That's not a quote from ***me***!

Benedict: That may have been a quote from me, Bill. I think I talked to the gentleman and several people about the resurgence of interest. We talked about the enthusiasm of the early days. The things you have seen and are interested in are due to the enthusiasm of gentlemen like Bill Witney.

Witney: It was due to my youth.

Benedict: Wait. I want to qualify this. I've known Bill Witney for a long time . . . .

Witney: Easy!

Benedict: We got off to a good start. The first day that I went to work he said, "I hate actors!" and I said, "I hate directors!" and he said, "We're going to get along fine." But let me tell you something about Bill. He knows what he wants. He'll tell you, there's no question about it. We had a lot of fun and I think if we threw it all in a kettle and boiled it down we'd come up with the fact that we were one big, happy family. We had problems, of course . . .

Witney: And I've had my nose broken a couple of times to prove it.

Benedict: I had fun right along the line — with Davey Sharpe, and certainly with Frank, and actors and directors that we worked with over all those years. We'll never see the business come back to the business that we knew. Davey put it very well yesterday in an interview when he said, "Where are you going to find another Bill Witney? Where are you going to find actors, producers, technicians,etc., who were involved at that time? They're not available any more." It's no reflection on the younger people who have gotten into it. As Bill said earlier, they're learning but they just don't have the experience. A whole new concept of making motion pictures has come into being in the past number of years and it's been a little frightening for some of us. I speak for myself now, coming into the industry when I did, and being able to associate with the men sitting on the panel up here — I say, God bless them all!

Barbour: We're running very short of time and I want to thank you all for coming. I wish we could go on all night. Earl Blair has a presentation to make now, so if you'll remain seated for a moment we'll call Mr. Earl Blair.

Blair: The men on the panel are modest and will tell you that they did it just for the work, but it didn't come out that way on the screen. We can never repay them for the hours of entertainment they have given us, but I hope this little presentation symbolizes the love we have for all of them. For each man here we have a small plaque — I wish they could be as big as this room. On each one it says "Houstoncon '73 Guest of Honor", and I'd like to present one to each man. (Plaques were also given to two artists who attended Houstoncon: Fred Fredericks, artist of "Mandrake The Magician" and Al Williamson, of "Secret Agent Corrigan.")

Barbour: That's it, unless any member of the panel has a final comment.

Benedict: I have a final comment. I ***always*** have a final comment. I think Earl Blair should get an award.

Coghlan: I agree with Bill. I'm in the public relations business and my main project is putting on special events, and I've never seen a man do a finer job on a well co-ordinated program and keep his sense and temper. It was just beautiful.

Alyn: I go along with what he just said. I've seen conventions before and this one has been just great. I don't know how Earl got in all the entertainment and timed it so beautifully. ***I*** think he deserves an award, too.

Sharpe: I would like to thank Earl and everyone here from the bottom of my heart. These gentlemen, and their work in our business, are entitled to the credits they have had photographed and projected on the screen. But please remember, I've always been on the other side of the fence, understood my position, was not expected to get any credit, and therefore I'm terribly grateful and honored that a total unknown would be invited here. This is my first trip to anything of this kind and I'm absolutely amazed at the wonderful reception and the manner in which I've been treated, at the enthusiasm of you people, the nostalgia, the appreciation and respect you apparently have for us — I just can't thank you too much.

Witney: I don't know what to say. I really didn't want to come to this. I'll level with you. I've been one of those guys all my life who has said things that have gotten me into terrible trouble. I called David and said, "I've been invited to Houston, are you going?" He said, "I'll go if you do." So I said, "Okay, you call and make the arrangements." About four or five days ago he called and said, "Bill, I called the airline and they made reservations for us, but they've been cancelled!" But they got things squared around, and I'm glad I came. Such charming people, my gosh, I'm a little embarrassed. I've never sought publicity in my life. I've steered away from it to a point that it's been a little ridiculous. Earl has handled this beautifully and when you speak of "beautiful" where's another beautiful little girl, his wife, that has worked as hard as he has and I tnink that she should get as much recognition for her beauty as for her hard work.

Barbour: Fred (Fredericks) and Al (Williamson) and I have been to a lot of conventions and a lot of you in this room have, and I don't think any of you have been to a better organized or more rewarding one. For me, the greatest pleasure in the world is to meet the people I admired for most of my life and I thank Earl for inviting me down to be a part of it. Thank you all.

END OF PANEL DISCUSSION.

Frank Coghlan and C.M. Parkhurst.

TOM TYLER'S LUCK /

by JOHN STOGINSKI
with the assistance of
Nick Williams

Luck is a two-faced lady. She bestows bad as well as good. ***Tom Tyler's*** career is testimony to that credo. His film work was first easily accomplished and praised, then rather offhandedly ignored.

Tom Tyler led a double life as did his screen counterparts. He was born Vincent Markowski on August 9, 1903 in Port Henry, New York (near Albany). His family migrated to Hamtramck (a suburb of Detroit), Michigan ten years after his birth.

There he attended St. Florian's grammar school and Hamtramck High. He became fascinated by the burgeoning film industry, spending his money to attend as many movies as he could afford . . . purchasing movie magazines . . . and experimenting with homemade make up kits.

Tom's obsession with the flickers did not go unnoticed by his parents. They knew that he would leave home to pursue his dream — Hollywood. Summoning up all of his courage, Tom made the fateful move to become an actor, once and for all.

His 1924 entrance in the land where phantasy often leads to reality, filled him with delight and determination to succeed. As many film aspirants before and after him, Tom became a "prop man" and extra.

At that time, novices were not hampered by strict union control. He landed a stint as an extra in "Ben-Hur". Then he was introduced to a phase of films that would eventually give him his renown — ***serials***. He shaved his head and became a convincing Indian heavy in LEATHERSTOCKING (Pathe, 1924).

Returning to MGM, where he had done "Ben-Hur", Tom got a much bigger part in "The Only Thing". This brought him to the attention of FBO (Film Booking Offices), the forerunner of RKO.

FBO was looking for a new western star. Taking a chance that they never regretted, Tom Tyler was launched in the saddle in "Let's Go Gallagher" (1925). Moviegoers instantly took to this newcomer. His looks and first name suggested (intentionally or not) Tom Mix. While the latter was at his peak, talkies became kinder to Tyler.

Tom shared some of his FBO westerns with a sharp youngster, Frankie Darro. On the same lot, making his own series, was Bob Steele. They became lifelong friends and years later (1941 - '43) co-starred in the last 13 "Three Mesquiteers" westerns. While most liked the original "3-M", kids growing up in the early 40's were more than satisfied with the work of Tom and Bob.

While Tyler resembled Mix, he had the quiet demeanor and strength of character of Buck Jones. Tyler had a lot going for him and made the best of his great qualities.

Tom's first starring serial was Mascot's PHANTOM OF THE WEST (1931). This was historic because it was released as "all talking", and without the usual need for a simultaneous silent version.

The Phantom of the West
CHAPTER TITLES

1. The Ghost Riders
2. The Stairway of Doom
3. The Horror in the Dark
4. The Battle of the Strong
5. The League of the Lawless
6. The Canyon of Calamity
7. The Price of Silence
8. The House of Hate
9. The Fatal Secret
10. Rogues' Roundup

Serial audiences took to this young, strong battler. From then on, Tom Tyler had a field of endeavor that added to his luster as a top cowboy ace. Both genres (serials and features) embraced this action daredevil. Alternating his assignments, the "Man of Iron" did his feature talkie debut in "West of Cheyenne" (Syndicate, 1931). Contrary to critics' reports, Tom's deep voice was fully capable of sensitive modulation.

Universal Pictures recognized his appeal to audiences and tapped him for their serial BATTLING WITH BUFFALO BILL (1931). Universal, as MGM, delighted with placing their action stars in historical milieus or settings.

Rex Bell, Lucile Browne and Tom Tyler.

As Tim McCoy did for MGM, Tom fully justified his studio's hopes. His "Buffalo Bill' was the most daring of the screen's counterparts. Lucile Browne aided immeasurably as the heroine in distress — a genuinely beautiful girl who could also act. A fast, zippy serial it was, one that would have made pulp-writer Ned Buntline envious.

Battling with Buffalo Bill
CHAPTER TITLES

1. Captured by Redskins
2. Circling Death
3. Between Hostile Tribes
4. The Savage Horde
5. The Fatal Plunge
6. Trapped
7. The Unseen Killer
8. Sentenced to Death
9. The Death Trap
10. A Shot from Ambush
11. The Flaming Death
12. Cheyenne Vengeance

Back to eight oaters for magnetic Monogram, Tom awaited his next serial assignment. Universal, more than pleased with his first cliff-hanger for them, decided a change of scenery would pay off big for Tom as well as themselves. So they combined two popular elements: suspense and the unknown thrills that come with a safari. The winning combination was called JUNGLE MYSTERY (1932).

A young, blonde charmer, who eventually endured the aggravations of a kid brother and found lasting fame as "Andy Hardy's" big sister, "Marion", shared the perils of JUNGLE MYSTERY with Tom — Cecelia Parker.

Miss Parker bore a striking resemblance to Lucile Browne. Many youngsters thought that "Buffalo Bill" shaved off his whiskers and carried his beloved off into jungle adventures.

Cecelia Parker, Noah Beery, Jr., Carmelita Geraghty and Tyler.

Jungle Mystery
CHAPTER TITLES

1. Into the Dark Continent
2. The Ivory Trail
3. The Death Stream
4. Poisoned Fangs
5. The Mystery Cavern
6. Daylight Doom
7. The Jaws of Death
8. Trapped by the Enemy
9. The Jungle Terror
10. Ambushed
11. The Lion's Fury
12. Buried Treasure

There was no stopping our hero now. Universal, wisely, put him in two more episoders back to back in 1933. Curiously, neither one was an out and out western. The studio, for reasons unknown, deduced Tom wasn't to be typed solely as a saddle drifter.

CLANCY OF THE MOUNTED came first and was not, as its title might imply, a Park Avenue drama. The story was set in Canada, and based on a poem by Robert W. Service. It allowed Tom the opportunity to parade his magnificent physique in a striking mountie uniform. Boys nor girls could resist a uniform.

Tyler and Jacqueline Wells.

The gorgeous heroine this time was Jacqueline Wells, although this became only another euphonious appellation for the blonde. True, this name change proved luckier and more recognizable than her first try at film archives, Diane Duval. Under that soubriquet, she won the hearts of the HEROES OF THE WEST (see TEMI pages 16 and 85). Most fans revere her for her final screen signature, Julie Bishop.

Clancy of the Mounted
CHAPTER TITLES

1. Toll of the Rapids
2. Brother Against Brother
3. Ambuscade
4. The Storm
5. A Desperate Chance
6. The Wolf's Fangs
7. The Night Attack
8. Crashing Timbers
9. Fingerprints
10. The Breed Strikes
11. The Crimson Jacket
12. Journey's End

Next followed PHANTOM OF THE AIR. Universal must have been psychic (as Mascot was earlier). While it bore no relation to the comic strip character, it foreshadowed his final serial, Columbia's THE PHANTOM (1943) ten years later. The sky phantom wore no mask (at least Tom's role didn't), and it was jam-packed with thrills. It was more adult than the studio's two juvenile oriented, and pleasing. "Tailspin Tommy" serials. The aerial "Phantom" was a mystery plane that flew without a human pilot. Gloria Shea, a fine specimen of feminity who deserved more roles, was the heroine.

Gloria Shea and Tyler.

Phantom of the Air
CHAPTER TITLES

1. The Great Air Meet
2. The Secret of the Desert
3. The Avenging Phantom
4. The Battle in the Clouds
5. Terror of the Heights
6. A Wild Ride
7. The Jaws of Death
8. Aflame in the Sky
9. The Attack
10. The Runaway Plane
11. In the Enemy's Hands
12. Safe Landing

Taking a hiatus from serials, Tom rode the dusty trails anew. He was in demand by both struggling and established studios. Switching from Reliable Pictures to RKO was as easy, to him, as putting on his gunbelt.

A plum role as a sympathetic "badman" in the Barnum & Bailey of westerns, "Powdersmoke Range", allowed Tom to steal all the kudos from his all-star compadres. Harry Carey, Bob Steele, Guinn "Big Boy" Williams and William Desmond seemed genuinely gratified at Tom's acting feat. That grand old man of the saddle, Harry Carey, especially endowed their scenes with the real concern of a veteran for a fond fledgling. Hoot Gibson, too, took a liking to the masterly acting of Tyler.

A more modern western reunited Tom, Harry and Hoot in RKO's "The Last Outlaw" (1936). Tom wore a business suit and sacrificed some of his finer qualities in a less demanding, humane role. It would have been a better film had it stuck to frontier days entirely.

Tom returned to more familiar ground in a group of oaters for Victory Pictures. That master of squeezing a nickel (so the Indian rides the buffalo), Sam Katzman, was the wily producer. He should have named his company more appropriately, Buffalo Pictures. [Writer's Note: Please do not misinterpret this statement. Victory westerns were most enjoyable and a credit to Sam and Tom. But it is well known that Katzman was a master at producing pictures and serials on the lowest possible budget to realize a larger share (and profit) from rental receipts.]

Of particular interest was Victory's "Lost Ranch". Tom's only wife, the very beautiful Jeanne Martell, was his reel heroine. Though their marriage did not last, they made a well-matched screen duo.

For a change of pace, Tom accepted an offer from the Wallace Bros. Circus. As Tim McCoy, Tom Mix, Ken Maynard and others, Tom couldn't resist his childhood love for the "world of larger than life" glitter.

Realizing he really belonged to the real tinsel of the silver screen, he returned to Hollywood. Roles included that of a cavalry officer in "Gone With The Wind" and Geronimo in "Valley of the Sun".

In a daring move, his old studio, Universal, chose him to follow in Boris Karloff's bandaged footsteps in a sequel that was every bit as good as the original, the fast-moving "The Mummy's Hand". It was unfortunate that he could not continue in the role, as he splendidly acquitted himself.

Republic Pictures gave him his most memorable part: the title role in ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL (see TEMI, page 298) in 1941.

Harry Worth, Ken Terrell (holding head) and Tyler.

After Tom completed his "Three Mesquiteers" series and left Republic, Columbia Pictures signed him to bring to life another comic strip hero — THE PHANTOM (1943). He was the living image of "The Ghost Who Walks". The serial is notable for the presence of Frank Shannon. He is, of course, fondly recalled as the wise "Dr. Zharkov" in the "Flash Gordon" trilogy. His role as "Professor Davidson" was a pivotal one as he searches for the lost city of Zoloz. Cute starlet Jeanne Bates was his niece, "Diana". Her name was taken from the strip, but out of context.

Age and arthritis took their toll on the handsome features of Tom Tyler. His starring roles were summarily over. Supporting roles were his only assignments now. He had one of his best parts in "The Younger Brothers" (1949). As Janis Paige's henchman, he shone in his loyalty to do her nefarious bidding, come what may.

In "Badman's Territory" (1946), Tom injected humor as "Jesse James". In one scene, he bet a bag of ill-gotten gains on a horse race. The bet taker innocently asked: "Which horse do you want to put your cash on?" Giving him a menacing stare, Tom said: "The winner."

Tom undertook in the early '50's what was fraught with peril. He wore the smallest hat of his career in six Robert Lippert westerns. As a cowboy hero, he had worn a big hat. Reduced to a tiny hat, he must have silently suffered indignities. The casts of these oaters was nostalgic: Russell "Lucky" Hayden, Jimmy "Shamrock" Ellison (both ex Hopalong Cassidy sidekicks), Raymond Hatton, Fuzzy Knight, Betty (nee Julie) Adams. Too bad that the scripts did not do justice to these wonderful actors.

Tom's last role was in "Cow Country" (1953), and it was heartbreaking. He only said two words as one of the gang battling Edmond O'Brien. His film career ended as he began it, but what thrills he furnished audiences in the long interval will always remain steadfast in our hearts and memories.

Reverting to his real name, Vincent Markowski, he returned to his loyal sister, Mrs. Katherine Slepski in Hamtramck, Michigan. A lesser man would have made known his arrival there. Not wishing to capitalize on his well-earned fame, he quietly endured his arthritis affliction. He died of a heart ailment in St. Francis Hospital on May 1, 1954.

●

EDITOR'S NOTE

The first five of Tom Tyler's serials were covered in Chapters one and two of TEMI; however, titles of individual episodes of each serial were omitted. To update the record, they are listed here.

THOSE ENDURING SERIAL FANS

Letters from TEMI fans are most welcome. However, the information supplied in these columns by readers is based on their opinions. The editor does not necessarily purport the info to be complete, exact or accurate.

ERRATUM AND ADDENDA

(Editor's Note: Regardless of what we state above in small type, our policy is, when time permits, to check information used on the letters' page prior to publication. In the case of the letter concerning ***Mary Kornman*** on page 343, it is all to obvious we did not do our homework, as evidenced by ***excerpts*** below received from a few of the many discontented (and rightly so) readers who deluged us with letters . . .)

Mary Kornman was one of the original members of "Our Gang" in 1922, as stated on page 29 of my book "***The Great Movie Shorts***", and stayed with the group quite a few years. My listing of "Our Gang" shorts only covered the ***sound*** era, when she made two (not one) return appearances in "Fish Hooky" and "Reunion in Rhythm".

Leonard Maltin
Teaneck, New Jersey

Mary Kornman worked in all, or nearly all, of the "Our Gang" ***silent*** films made between 1922 to 1929. I played an extra in several of the early comedies in 1922.

Frank Coghlan
Sepulveda, Calif.

Mary Kornman was married to Ralph McCutcheon, who has a 150 acre location ranch in Newhall (Calif.) and rents horses and livestock to the studios. I met Mrs. McCutcheon on several occasions and she talked about how much fun she had making the "Our Gang" shorts in the '20's.

Tiny Provizer
Culver City, Calif.

THE SHADOW has two distinct errors in its coverage on page 320. The role of Stanford Marshall (who turned out to be "The Black Tiger") was played by Robert Fiske, and not J. Paul Jones.

I don't know where the picture on page 320 (which is supposed to be "The Black Tiger") came from, but there is little doubt in my mind that it is not who it is supposed to be. All the "Tiger"ever appeared as was a beam of light, until the last chapter when The Shadow shoots out the light source to reveal Marshall dressed in street clothes.

Bruce Leonard
So. Westworthville,
Australia

(Editor's Note: Correct! Unhappily, no reader pointed out the first error when a picture (wrongly) identifying "The Black Tiger" appeared on page 86. The photo on page 320 is from THE VIGILANTE (Col., '47) and allegedly the master villain, "X-1". The second error was a typo made while writing up the narrative, which is certainly no legitimate excuse.)

* * *

Bud Thackery's first serial as director of photography was KING OF THE MOUNTIES (Rep., '42), followed-up by G-MEN VS. THE BLACK DRAGON — which would up his work on serials to 20 (See pg. 337).

The photo of Clayton Moore boffing a guy in G-MEN NEVER FORGET (pg. 334), and identified only as actor, is Bud Wolfe.

Harry Sanford
Los Angeles, Calif.

* * *

NECROLOGY

Frederick Worlock, 87, passed away on August 1st at the Motion Picture Country Hospital, Woodland Hills, California. A wonderful character actor, he is probably best remembered by serial enthusiasts as Sir James Langley in SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA (Rep., '43).

A scene from DAUGHTER OF DON Q.

C. Montague Shaw and Lon Chaney, Jr. attacking Ray Corrigan in UNDERSEA KINGDOM (Rep., 1936).

MAXINE DOYLE appeared in two additional features and a serial omitted from her list of films contained on page 342. Oddly enough, each of the omissions were brought to our attention by three totally different sources: Les Adams, Charles Reinitz and Blackie Seymour.

Order of Release	Title, Producer, Director and Cast
1935	***Condemned to Live*** (Invincible) Frank R. Strayer (d); Ralph Morgan, Mischa Auer.
2/15/36	***Taming the Wild*** (Victory) Robert Hill (d); Rod La-Rocque.
1946	***Daughter of Don Q*** (Republic serial) Spencer Bennet and Fred Brannon (ds); Adrian Booth, Kirk Alyn. Miss Doyle was unbilled and appeared as "Knock-out Nellie" only in episode 9. She is killed in a nightclub by Roy Barcroft. (See photo above — L. to R. are Doyle, Alyn and Booth.)

LON CHANEY, JR. died in San Clemente, California at the age of 67 on July 12, 1973 after a lengthy illness. His career in serials could be labeled ***ironic***. He topped the cast in THE LAST FRONTIER (R.K.O., '32 — see TEMI pg. 16), his first of six serials and used his christen name Creighton; then he was billed no higher than fifth in the cast of four serials during the ten intervening years until he, again, received first billing in his last serial, OVERLAND MAIL (Universal, 1942). In the latter, he performed under the name Lon Chaney (without the "Jr.").

The Editor

I hope you will mention in passing that Lon Chaney, Jr. was a good actor who was thrown into horror roles to capitalize on his famous father's name. He made good in such appearances as the dim-witted Lennie in "Of Mice and Men" (1939) ... and the old sheriff who could no longer use a gun because of arthritis and help Gary Cooper in "High Noon" (1952).

Jerry Mezerow
Placentia, Calif.

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NECROLOGY Continued

Captain Eddie (Edward Vernon) Rickenbacker died in Zurich, Switzerland, at age 82, on July 23rd. While the Captain never performed in a serial, he did grace the first page of the first Chapter of TEMI in 1969 in a publicity photo promoting ACE DRUMMOND — based on a comic strip he "authored" that was eventually brought to life on the screen by Universal Pictures as a 13-episode cliff-hanger in 1936. Coverage of the serial is on page 96.

Sam Katzman died at age 72 on August 4th in Hollywood. He was a prolific producer of motion picture features, including serials for his own company, Victory Pictures, in the mid-30's, and the final 33 out of 57 serials released by Columbia Pictures — commencing with BRENDA STARR, REPORTER (1945) and ending with BLAZING THE OVERLAND TRAIL (1956). There are some interesting references to Mr. Katzman in this Chapter of TEMI as well as on pages 166 and 240. And with more to come.

EDITOR'S NOTES. Good news! Chapter 25 coming up next will mark our Fourth Anniversary! It will have 20 pages — and commence our fifth year of publication. A loyal following of readers has made it all possible by subscribing; contributing articles, photos and critique; and, advertising in TEMI . . . . Some credits for this Chapter: PHANTOM poster, C.M. Parkhurst; BUFFALO BILL photo, Lucile Browne; Cover photo, Angel Gutierrez . . . Part I of THE GREEN HORNET will appear next Chapter.

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PRESSBOOKS WANTED!!! (Republic) The Lone Ranger (not the reprint), Zorro's Fighting Legion, Zorro's Black Whip, Manhunt of Mystery Island, The Phantom Rider, Daughter of Don Q, The Crimson Ghost, Son of Zorro, The Black Widow, Ghost of Zorro, The Invisible Monster and Jesse James Rides Again; (Universal) Lost City of the Jungle, Royal Mounted Rides Again, Secret Agent X-9 (Bridges' version); The Oregon Trail and anything prior to Buck Jones' The Red Rider; (Columbia) The Phantom. State condition and asking price in first letter. LES ADAMS, 4707 36th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79414.

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